

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-07

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S E C R E T STATE 189537

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, US

SUBJECT: US-SAUDI COOPERATION IN SUPPORT OF NORTH YEMEN:
JULY 29 JOINT MILITARY MEETING
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REFS: (A) STATE 172366; (B) JIDDA 5106; (C) JIDDA 5342;
(D) JIDDA 5341; (E) SANA 3553

1. AS WE STATED IN OUR INITIAL CABLE (REF A) WE SHARE SAUDI
CONCERN OVER RECENT EVENTS IN SOUTH ARABIA AND ARE SENSITIVE
TO AND SEEK TO BE RESPONSIVE TO BOTH THE POLITICAL AND
MILITARY NEED TO DEVELOP A CREDIBLE YAR DEFENSIVE POSTURE.
WE HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY EXAMINING THE STATUS OF PREVIOUSLY
APPROVED US-EQUIPMENT FOR YEMEN'S MILITARY MODERNIZATION WITH
A VIEW TOWARD RESPONDING QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY. WE ARE

MOST APPRECIATIVE OF THE COMMENTS AND THOUGHTFUL SUGGESTIONS
WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM ALL ADDRESSEES.

2. IN DEALING WITH THE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS OF EQUIPMENT,
TRAINING AND ADMINISTRATION WE WILL FACE THE UNDERLYING
QUESTION OF WHETHER SAG IS REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT DEVELOPING
AN EFFECTIVE YAR MILITARY FORCE, AND IF SO, CAPABLE OF
PLAYING LEAD ROLE IN THIS UNDERTAKING. SAUDI AMBIVALENCE
HAS, IN THE PAST, IMPAIRED EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR
JOINT EFFORTS, AS MINIFEST IN THE APPARENT LACK OF PROGRESS

IN REORGANIZATION AND TRAINING OF THE YAR GROUND FORCES, IN
THEIR HANDLING OF THE F-5B TRANSFER AND THEIR UNWILLINGNESS
TO DISTRIBUTE EQUIPMENT ALREADY DELIVERED. AS A RESULT,
UNTIL NOW WE HAVE BEEN IN AN AWKWARD POSITION. WE HEAR
COMPLAINTS FROM THE YAR ABOUT THE LACK OF MOTION IN THE
JOINT UNDERTAKING WHILE HAVING AT THE SAME TIME TO RESPOND
TO SAUDI COMPLAINTS OF INSUFFICIENT US CONCERN ABOUT THE
SECURITY PROBLEM IN SOUTH ARABIA. PRIOR TO RECENT EVENTS,
WE HAD NOT FOUND THE OPPORTUNITY TO PERSUADE SAG TO LINK
ITS GENERAL CONCERN FOR A MORE ACTIVE US ROLE IN REGIONAL
SECURITY PROBLEMS WITH THE ACTUAL STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE
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US-SAUDI UNDERTAKING TO IMPROVE THE YAR DEFENSE CAPABILITY.

3. NOW THE OPPORTUNITY APPEARS AT HAND. BASED ON
AMBASSADOR WEST'S CONVERSATIONS WITH SULTAN AND OTHER
SIMILAR CONVERSATIONS OVER THE PAST MONTH, THERE IS HOPE
THAT SAUDI ARABIA NOW PERCEIVES - ITS OWN BEST
INTERESTS WILL BE SERVED BY FULLY COMMITTING ITSELF TO THE
SECURITY AND ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT OF YAR.

4. WE THEREFORE WISH TO CAST OUR PRESENTATION ON JULY 29
IN MOST POSITIVE POSSIBLE LIGHT. WE WISH TO APPEAR TO
ASSUME THAT SAG FULLY SHARES WITH US CONVICTION THAT IT IS
IN OUR COMMON INTEREST TO MOVE QUICKLY WITHIN EXISTING
PROGRAM TO GIVE YAR PROGRAM SUPPORT THROUGH EARLY DEMON-
STRATION OF PROGRESS IN MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM AND
TO WORK EFFECTIVELY TO BUILD IN TIME A REALLY CREDIBLE,
IF MODEST, NORTH YEMENI DEFENSE CAPABILITY.

5. SINCE YAR SUPPORT IS A SENSITIVE ISSUE IN US-SAUDI
RELATIONS, WE
BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT US PARTICIPTION BE SEEN TO BE
THE RESULT OF A POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE
US-SAUDI-YAR MILITARY RELATIONSHIP. ACCORDINGLY, WE HAVE
DECIDED TO SEND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (ISA)
ROBERT MURRAY TO RIYADH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSIONS
(TRAVEL DETAILS SEPTTEL). WE ALSO BELIEVE IT COULD BE
USEFUL IF AMBASSADOR WEST WOULD LEAD OFF THE DISCUSSIONS
BY SKETCHING THE BROAD POLICY FRAMEWORK IN WHICH THEY WILL

BE TAKING PLACE AND DRAWING FOR THIS PURPOSE AS APPROPRIATE ON STATE 172366 AND STATE 184105. WE ASSUME SAUDIS WILL RECIPROCATATE WITH COMPARABLE REPRESENTATION FROM THEIR SIDE.

6. SPECIFIC PROPOSALS DEVELOPED ON ACCELERATION OF EXISTING PROGRAM ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) EQUIPMENT:

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-- MOBILE AIR DEFENSE RADAR, EITHER TPS-32 OR TPS-43:
THERE ARE NO AIR DEFENSE RADARS IN THE PRESENT PROGRAM NOR DOES YEMEN HAVE EVEN A RUDIMENTARY CAPABILITY IN THIS DIRECTION. RADAR WOULD BE A PRACTICAL AND QUITE VISIBLE HELP TO YEMEN. WE CAN PROVIDE, AT RELATIVELY LOW COST (UNDER DOLS 10 MILLION EACH), MOBILE AIR DEFENSE RADARS THAT WOULD ALLOW EARLY WARNING AND TARGET ACQUISITION AS WELL AS NORMAL AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL. THESE WOULD REQUIRE TRAINING, OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE FROM THE US, MAINLY WITH CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL. WE CAN DELIVER TWO RADAR SETS WITHIN SIXTY DAYS FROM THE TIME OF AGREEMENT. THESE WOULD NOT REQUIRE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL.

-- VULCAN AIR DEFENSE GUNS: THE YEMEN HAS 74 VULCAN GUNS ON ORDER, NONE OF WHICH HAVE BEEN DELIVERED. WE COULD EXPEDITE THE DELIVERY ON SEVEN OF THESE GUNS BY SEPTEMBER 1978 AND THE REMAINING 67 BY SECOND QUARTER FY 1979.

-- F-5 AIRCRAFT: WE AGREED, AND CONGRESS DID NOT OBJECT, TO CONSENT TO THE TRANSFER OF FOUR F-5B TRAINING AIRCRAFT FROM SAUDI ARABIA TO THE YAR. WE CAN ASSIST IN THE DELIVERY OF THE FOUR F-5BS WITHIN THREE TO FOUR MONTHS, PERHAPS SOONER. BASED ON FINDINGS OF THE RECENTLY COMPLETED USAF/NORTHROP INSPECTION OF YEMENI FACILITIES, WE CAN HELP THE SAUDIS WITH THE TRAINING PROGRAM. WE WOULD ALSO PROPOSE THAT THE SUPPORT OF THE YEMEN F-5B PROGRAM BE, AT LEAST IN ITS INITIAL STAGES, AN EXTENSION OF THE CURRENT PEACE HAWK PROGRAM IN SAUDI ARABIA.

-- DELIVERY OF A BULK OF THE LAWS WITHIN A TWO-MONTH PERIOD

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-- (FYI: REDEYE IS NO LONGER IN PRODUCTION AND IS NOT AVAILABLE FROM US ARMY STOCK. IN ADDITION US POLICY IS TO CLOSELY CONTROL MANPAD SYSTEMS, SUCH AS REDEYE. FOR THESE REASONS REDEYE WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR SALE TO YAR. END FYI.)

B. TRAINING :

-- WE RECOGNIZE NEED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE TRAINING PERSONNEL IN YAR TO MAKE ACCELERATION OF THIS PROGRAM MEANINGFUL, AND WE ARE PREPARED TO DO OUR PART IN THIS REGARD. WE NEED TO CONSIDER WITH SAG FUNDING AND BEST COMPOSITION OF TRAINING TEAMS, LOOKING AT POSSIBILITIES OF PROVIDING EITHER US PERSONNEL, OR PERHAPS IN SOME CASES, THIRD COUNTRY PERSONNEL SUCH AS JORDANIANS.

-- SAG MAY ALSO WISH TO CONSIDER FUNDING FOR QUALIFIED OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE YEMENI ARMED FORCES FOR TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES AND AT SUITABLE TRAINING FACILITIES IN SAUDI ARABIA IN BOTH TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL FIELDS.

-- WE HAVE REVIEWED THE CURRENT IMET PROGRAM AND THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER IN SANA. HOWEVER, WHILE IMET FUNDS MAY BE USED FOR EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL COSTS, THEY MAY NOT BE USED FOR RENT OR PURCHASE OF A BUILDING. IN ADDITION, WHILE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A FACILITY COULD BE ACCELERATED, THEREBY CREATING A BASIS FOR FURTHER MILITARY TRAINING IN THE US, AND DEVELOPING A CADRE OF ENGLISH SPEAKING OFFICERS TO OFF-SET THOSE SOVIET TRAINED, THE DIVERSION OF SUCH FUNDS WOULD ADVERSELY IMPACT ON FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS TO BE SENT TO THE US. PERHAPS SOME COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT CAN BE MADE WITH THE SAG TO EXPEDITE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CENTER. (FYI: GIVEN CURRENT BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS IT IS UNLIKELY WE CAN EXPECT SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN IMET FUNDING. END FYI.)

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C. TRANSFER OF F-5BS AND AUGUSTA-BELL HELICOPTERS: (SEE JIDDA 5417 AND JIDDA 5418). NON-TRANSFER ASSURANCES RECENTLY RECEIVED FROM SAG ON F-5B AND HELICOPTERS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT UNDER US LAW AND PROCEDURE NOR DO THEY ADHERE TO DRAFT LANGUAGE PREVIOUSLY SUPPLIED AND THEREFORE CANNOT BE ACCEPTED AS SATISFYING US REQUIREMENT. WE PROPOSE THAT IN ORDER TO EXPEDITE TRANSFERS OUR EMBASSY IN SANA OBTAIN ASSURANCES DIRECTLY FROM HOST GOVERNMENT. (FYI: THE SAME WILL BE DONE VIS-A-VIS HELICOPTERS FOR BAHRAIN. END FYI.)

D. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT: RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR SMALL DOD CONTINGENT CAPABLE OF HELPING TO MANAGE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM, AND THE NEED TO MANIFEST A DIRECT US ROLE IN YEMEN, WE ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF POSITION (S) IN EMBASSY SANA TO THESE ENDS. (FYI: IF ESTABLISHED, UNIT WOULD MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH USMTM BUT WOULD NOT BE OPERATIONALLY LINKED TO IT. MURRAY IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS MODALITIES WITH CHARGE WHILE IN SANA. END FYI.)

E. IF SAG REQUESTS AGREEMENT TO PROCEED WITH THE SALE OF ADDITIONAL F-5S, YOU SHOULD RESPOND THAT ADMINISTRATION IS PREPARED IN PRINCIPLE TO GIVE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION TO PROVIDING APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT. BUT AS SAG IS AWARE, WE CANNOT MAKE A FORMAL COMMITMENT UNTIL WE HAVE CONSULTED WITH CONGRESS. UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, GIVEN

THE CONGRESSIONAL CALENDAR FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR, FORMAL NOTIFICATION COULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL THE CONGRESS RETURNS IN FEBRUARY 1979. WE WOULD APPRECIATE SAG VIEWS ON NUMBERS, TYPE AND TIMING OF DELIVERIES FOR
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AIRCRAFT INVOLVED. IN THIS REGARD, IN CONSIDERING PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL F-5S FOR YEMEN, WE AND SAG MAY FIRST WISH TO ASSESS PROGRESS MADE ON F-5B PROGRAM IN COMING FEW MONTHS.

7. HIGH LEVEL MEETING IN WASHINGTON SCHEDULED FOR JULY 27 WILL INTER ALIA DISCUSS US RELATIONS WITH YAR. SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE RESULTING FROM MEETING WILL BE PROVIDED IF APPROPRIATE. CHRISTOPHER

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